

Office of Professional Accountability (OPA)

Commendations & Complaints Report

September 2003

Commendations:

Commendations Received in September: 49

Commendations Received to Date: 646

Rank	Summary
(1) Dispatcher	A dispatcher received a very difficult 911 call and handled it with the utmost patience and professionalism. During this extremely challenging situation the dispatcher maintained control of her own emotions and was a very calming influence to the caller.
(1) Officer (1) Parking Enforcement Officer	An officer handled an incident where a car was stolen and recovered by a parking enforcement officer before the owner was aware it had been stolen. The officer and parking enforcement officer were pleasant, friendly and professional.
(1) Officer	An officer quickly responded and facilitated the removal of an obstruction at the Duwamish waterway saving thousands of dollars in potential damage costs. A job well done!
(1) Dispatcher	A dispatcher provided excellent "police work" which will likely result in one or more theft and/or robberies being solved. Similar incidents occurred in two separate locations of the city several days apart. The dispatcher cross-referenced the cases and provided the investigating officers the information.
(2) Officers	A friendly officer allowed two children he was talking with to sit in his police car and have their picture taken. The children enjoyed the officer taking time to stop and say "hello". Another officer stopped by the children's home and gave a helmet to the younger child to wear while riding his toy car.
(1) Officer	An officer responded to a 911 call regarding suspicious behavior and disturbances in a local neighborhood. Young adults were loud and disruptive in the middle of the night while people were sleeping. The neighbors were grateful an officer intervened and resolved the situation.
(1) Officer	An officer was exceptional in his investigation of a break-in of a vehicle. The officer was kind, helpful and went out of his way to explain the evidentiary procedures.
(3) Officers	A business owner located on Lake Union commended Harbor Patrol #4 that responded to an enormous fire on Lake Union. Harbor Patrol #4 stabilized the situation until the land forces of the Seattle Fire Department could arrive. The boating community has gained the respect of Harbor Patrol #4 once again. Thank you!
(1) Officer	An officer responded to a 911 call from a citizen, concerned about a family member that could not be reached by phone. The officer investigated and found the individual to be fine and notified the family. The officer's patience, kindness and understanding were worthy of emulation.
(2) Officers	Two police officers provided professional, expertise and a cooperative spirit in solving a gang related homicide of another law enforcement agency. The interaction and the help provided by these two officers was greatly appreciated.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted an elderly couple with vehicle problems and they believed his professionalism is an asset to the department.
(1) Lieutenant (1) Officer	A lieutenant and an officer monitored a community charity benefit. The officers appeared to go beyond the call of duty and to insure that all attendees were safe, satisfied and happy.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to a domestic violence assault. The officers made it very

	clear through their accurate report that this was an extremely dangerous and volatile situation for the victim. It was a job well-done, well-documented and the investigation deserves to be recognized.
(1) Sergeant	A sergeant spoke to a national meeting-planner visiting the Seattle area. The sergeant's demeanor left the visitor with a positive impression of a city police department that cares about its visitors and conventioners.
(1) Officer	An officer was exceptional and thorough in the investigation of a break-in of a vehicle. The officer was kind, helpful and went out of his way to explain the evidentiary procedures to the victim.
(1) Officer	An officer responded to a 911 call regarding a stolen wallet from a citizen's residence. The officer was considerate, thoughtful, and thorough and did not think a theft had occurred. The officer helped the individual in backtracking daily events and the next day the wallet was located. The citizen was grateful for the professional and sensitive way the incident was handled.
(1) Officer	Two citizens were feeling uncomfortable about an on-going harassment issue. An officer spoke to the citizens and advised how to proceed with a protection order. The officer was highly professional, extremely respectful and had a great sense of humor, which helped anxiety levels.
(1) Civilian	Out of state visitors were in an automobile accident and wished to obtain all records of the incident before returning home. The civilian contact went the extra mile and followed through with providing the information. The visitors were very thankful and commended the civilian employee and the department for excellent customer service.
(1) Officer	A car was stolen from a residence and an officer was extremely helpful in easing the victim's mind. The officer was professional and is a credit to the police department.
(2) Officers	Two officers were dispatched to remove an individual from a Metro bus and when they arrived, they found the person unresponsive. The officers determined he was not breathing and began CPR immediately. Soon thereafter, a SFD Medic unit arrived and discovered the officers had restored a pulse to the victim. The paramedics said if the officers had not been so skilled in administration of CPR the victim would have died. Both officers were commended for their quick thinking and decisive action.
(1) Officer	A victim contacted 911 when threatened with a knife. An officer arrived a few minutes later and located the suspect who was taken into custody. The officer showed professionalism and prevented a potential tragedy.
Officers of the South Precinct	A couple wanted to express their appreciation to the officers of the South Precinct for being diligent in their community. The police presence has not gone unnoticed.
2) Officers	Two police officers instructed military cadets on their own time and at their own expense. The staff was truly impressed by the instructors' professionalism and competent demonstration.
(1) Sergeant (2) Officers	Commendations for one sergeant and two officers for their sincere and noble efforts, patience and skill in rescuing and preventing an intended suicide. Together, the officers worked, as a team in negotiating with the individual and the crisis was resolved.
(1) Detective	The Seattle City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit presented a 2003 Domestic Violence Award based on a detective's investigation. The attorney's office appreciated the outstanding and dedicated service in deterring the serious crime of domestic violence in Seattle.
(2) Officers	A retirement residence appreciates the Seattle police bicycle patrol unit for spending time and assuring the community is safe.
(2) Officers	A business owner moved to a new location within the city and two officers made several visits. The officers addressed safety tips and concerns of the area. The business owner truly appreciated the attentiveness the officers provided to the business community.

(4) Officers	Four officers investigated an occupied residential burglary and as a result of their efforts, the case was solved and the suspect was quickly charged with residential burglary.
(1) Civilian	A crime prevention coordinator has been upbeat, positive, enthusiastic and has given a citizen the confidence to contact 911 when unruly situations occur. The coordinator was patient and always took the time to listen, to talk through matters of concern and then offered reasoned suggestions about strategies for addressing the matter.
(2) Officers	A visitor from out of the Seattle area related that officers provided outstanding service and deserved to be recognized by the city of Seattle for making a stranger feel safe in our city.
(1) Sergeant	A sergeant helped out with an automobile accident and was very courteous, efficient and kind
(1) Officer	An officer was recently called upon with rather short notice to appear in court. The officer's testimony and demeanor were a refreshing display of professionalism amid an otherwise troubled trial. His efforts should be commended.
(1) Officer	The responding officer to a hit and run accident did a fine job and was very helpful, thorough and reassuring to the victim. The victim's family appreciated the courtesy and professionalism and felt very fortunate to have been served by such a fine representative of the Seattle Police Department.
(1) Officer	Earlier this summer, a citizen's vehicle was stolen from downtown Seattle. The victim was upset and frustrated, however, the experience with the Seattle Police Department was positive. The responding officer was helpful, kind and handled the situation courteously and professionally.

September 2003 Closed Cases:

Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.

UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named officer used unnecessary force in taking subject to ground.	Evidence showed officers were responding to a shots fired call. A store employee pointed to a group of juveniles, and the juveniles were ordered to the ground. Of the seven juveniles, all complied except for the subject who ignored police commands and was hostile and argumentative. The named officer used force to push the subject to the ground. The subject did not receive any visible or apparent injuries. The force used was documented, screened and reported. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged the named officer used unnecessary force in confronting him at a response to a disturbance call.	Investigation showed that there was minimal contact between the complainant and the named officer. The evidence showed that the contact was inadvertent, but was reasonably perceived as intentional by the complainant. Upon review of the evidence, the case was referred for supervisory resolution. The complainant was notified of the outcome and the justification. Finding – Converted to Supervisory Referral (SR).

CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named officer made derogatory remarks to him during a vehicle traffic stop.	All officer witnesses state that at no time did the named officer make any derogatory comments. The complainant made his initial allegation only after determining that the contact was not audio or video taped, and did not respond to requests for contact by the investigator. Finding – UNFOUNDED.

Definitions of Findings:

“Sustained” means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Not sustained” means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Unfounded” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

“Exonerated” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

Referred for Supervisory Resolution.

Training or Policy Recommendation means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated” is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee’s actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

“Administratively Inactivated” means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

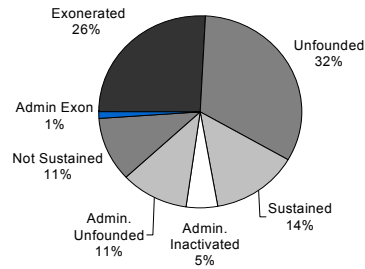
Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	1	184*
Commendations	27	1,416

*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

CHART A
Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations
2002 Cases
N=361 Allegations in 184 cases



2003 Contacts

	September 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	9	371
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	7	68
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	3	132
Commendations	49	646